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## Fifth Committee

**Summary record of the 30th meeting**
Held at Headquarters, New York, on Monday, 2 April 2012, at 4.30 p.m.

*Chair*: Mr. Tommo Monthe ..... (Cameroon)
*Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions*: Mr. Kelapile

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*The meeting was called to order at 8.55 p.m.*

**Agenda item 140: Joint Inspection Unit** (*continued*)

*Draft resolution A/C.5/66/L.29: Joint Inspection Unit*

1. *Draft resolution A/C.5/66/L.29 was adopted.*

**Agenda item 134: Programme budget for the biennium 2012-2013** (*continued*)

*Special subjects relating to the programme budget for the biennium 2012-2013* (A/C.5/66/L.31)

*Draft resolution A/C.5/66/L.31: Special subjects relating to the programme budget for the biennium 2012-2013*

2. **Ms. Lapointe** (Under-Secretary-General for Internal Oversight Services), with reference to section III of the draft resolution, said that the internal audit activities of the Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS)were conducted in accordance with Institute of Internal Auditors international standards for the professional practice of such auditing. The United Nations internal auditing services had adopted those standards, which required auditing entities to possess or obtain the requisite knowledge, skill or other competencies, including obtaining advice or assistance to perform all or part of any undertaking. OIOS regularly contracted for specialized skills, competencies and advice to supplement its own, and would need to do so for the proposed in-depth, technical construction audit for the capital master plan, as a result of the nature of that audit.

3. *Draft resolution A/C.5/66/L.31 was adopted.*

**Agenda item 132: Review of the efficiency of the administrative and financial functioning of the United Nations** (*continued*)

*Progress towards an accountability system in the United Nations Secretariat* (A/C.5/66/L.30)

*Draft resolution A/C.5/66/L.30: Progress towards an accountability system in the United Nations Secretariat*

4. **Mr. Mihoubi** (Algeria), introducing the draft resolution on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, said that the text was divided into two parts. Section I related to progress towards an accountability system, and section II related to change management initiatives. As the members of the Committee were well aware from their informal consultations, discussions on accountability had proceeded smoothly prior to the issuance of the report of the Secretary-General on progress towards an accountability system in the United Nations Secretariat (A/66/692). However, the report had changed the landscape, blurring the distinction between the areas within the purview of the General Assembly and those within the purview of the Secretary-General. The subsequent difficulties would have been avoided had the report confined itself to matters of internal management of the Secretariat. The draft resolution reflected the Group's belief in preserving the prerogatives of the Member States, which were represented at the current meeting and which determined the Organization's direction.

5. **Mr. Torsella** (United States of America) said that his delegation wished to propose an oral amendment to draft resolution A/C.5/66/L.30, in which the existing section II would be replaced with the following:

"*Reaffirming* its determination to strengthen further the role, capacity, effectiveness and efficiency of the United Nations, and thus improve its performance, in order to realize the full potential of the Organization, in accordance with the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations, and to respond more effectively to the needs of Member States and existing and new global challenges facing the United Nations in the twenty-first century;

1. *Welcomes* the initiative of the Secretary-General and the work of the Change Management Team and the Change Management Plan;

2. *Reaffirms* the role of the Fifth Committee in administrative and budgetary matters;

3. *Reaffirms* the role of the Secretary-General as Chief Administrative Officer of the Organisation;

4. *Encourages* the Secretary-General to engage closely with the General Assembly on his vision for a modem, efficient and accountable Secretariat;

5. *Notes* the Secretary-General's recognition that several recommendations will require close, in-depth consultations and direction from Member States;

6. *Requests* the Secretary-General to revert at the second resumed part of its sixty-sixth session with an analysis of the recommendations that fall within his purview and those that require Member State review and approval in line with the provisions of this resolution."

6. **The Chair** said that a recorded vote had been requested on the oral amendment to section II of draft resolution A/C.5/66/L.30 proposed by the representative of the United States of America.

7. **Ms. Rohrmann** (Denmark), speaking on behalf of the European Union in explanation of vote before the voting, said that the Member States of the European Union strongly supported, and commended to all Member States, the amendment proposed by the United States of America. Its wording offered a balanced reflection of the Committee's discussions of the matter and demonstrated the continued effort of a number of Member States, irrespective of regional or group affiliation, to achieve a compromise. The proposed amendment recognized the efforts of the Secretary-General and the concerns raised by some Member States in connection with change management. Furthermore, it safeguarded the prerogatives of the General Assembly and provided it with the opportunity to consider the proposals in the Secretary-General's Change Management Plan.

8. **Ms. Smith** (Norway), speaking in explanation of vote before the voting, said that Norway strongly supported the amendment proposed by the United States of America. It reflected the Committee's discussions, clearly demonstrated a will to reach compromise in the interests of a consensus on an important issue, and balanced the concerns of all parties. It highlighted the role of the Member States while supporting the efforts of the Secretary-General to strengthen the Organization.

9. *At the request of the representative of Algeria, speaking on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, a recorded vote was taken on the oral amendment to section II of draft resolution A/C.5/66/L.30 proposed by the representative of the United States of America.*

*In favour*:

Albania, Andorra, Australia, Austria, Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Canada, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Japan, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Monaco, Montenegro, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Poland, Republic of Korea, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Turkey, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America.

*Against*:

Afghanistan, Algeria, Angola, Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Bahamas, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Barbados, Belarus, Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Botswana, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Chile, China, Colombia, Comoros, Congo, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Cuba, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Djibouti, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Eritrea, Gabon, Ghana, Grenada, Guatemala, Guyana, Honduras, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Iraq, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kuwait, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Lebanon, Libya, Malaysia, Maldives, Mauritius, Morocco, Myanmar, Namibia, Nepal, Nicaragua, Niger, Nigeria, Oman, Pakistan, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Qatar, Russian Federation, Rwanda, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Singapore, Solomon Islands, South Africa, South Sudan, Sri Lanka, Syrian Arab Republic, Tajikistan, Thailand, Togo, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, Turkmenistan, Uganda, United Arab Emirates, United Republic of Tanzania, Uruguay, Uzbekistan, Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of), Viet Nam, Zambia, Zimbabwe.

*Abstaining*:

Liberia, Mexico, Panama, Serbia, Ukraine

10. *The proposed amendment to section II of draft resolution A/C.5/66/L.30 was rejected by 88 votes to 47, with 5 abstentions.*

11. **Mr. Torsella** (United States of America) requested a division of draft resolution A/C.5/66/L.30 proposed by the representative of Algeria on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, with separate consideration of section II.

12. **Mr. Mihoubi** (Algeria), on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, **Mr. Di Luca** (Argentina), **Mr. Vargas** (Brazil), **Mr. Cumberbatch** (Cuba), **Mr. McLay** (New Zealand), **Mr. Rosales Díaz** (Nicaragua), and

**Mr. Prokhorov** (Russian Federation), speaking on a point of order, asked for clarification of the procedure to be followed in the current instance, and, in particular, clarification as to which rule of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly applied, as that would affect how the Member States expressed their views in the vote.

13. **The Chair** said that rule 129 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly allowed part of a proposal to be put to a separate vote, and it was that matter on which the Member States were being requested to vote.

14. *A recorded vote was taken on the motion for division concerning section II of draft resolution A/C.5/66/L.30 proposed by the representative of the United States of America.*

*In favour*:

Albania, Andorra, Australia, Austria, Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Canada, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Japan, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Monaco, Montenegro, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Palau, Poland, Republic of Korea, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Solomon Islands, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Turkey, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America.

*Against*:

Afghanistan, Algeria, Angola, Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Bahamas, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Barbados, Belarus, Benin, Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Botswana, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Chile, China, Colombia, Comoros, Congo, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Cuba, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Djibouti, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Eritrea, Gabon, Ghana, Grenada, Guatemala, Guyana, Honduras, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Iraq, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kuwait, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Lebanon, Liberia, Libya, Madagascar, Malaysia, Maldives, Mauritius, Mongolia, Morocco, Myanmar, Namibia, Nepal, Nicaragua, Niger, Nigeria, Oman, Pakistan, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Qatar, Russian Federation, Rwanda, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Singapore, South Africa, South Sudan, Sri Lanka, Syrian Arab Republic, Tajikistan, Thailand, Togo, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, Turkmenistan, Uganda, United Arab Emirates, United Republic of Tanzania, Uruguay, Uzbekistan, Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of), Viet Nam, Zambia, Zimbabwe.

*Abstaining*:

Mexico, Panama, Serbia, Ukraine

15. *The motion for division concerning section II of the draft resolution was rejected by 91 votes to 48, with 4 abstentions.**

16. **Mr. Sheck** (Canada), speaking also on behalf of Australia and New Zealand, requested a recorded vote on the draft resolution as a whole.

17. **Ms. Rohrmann** (Denmark), speaking on behalf of the European Union in explanation of vote before the voting, said that the Member States of the European Union regretted the absence of consensus on the agenda item under discussion, despite their own active engagement and great flexibility in pursuing such an outcome. However, they had made clear their position that the proposals made by the Change Management Team to the Secretary-General fell outside the scope of the discussion of an accountability system. The proposals were for internal consideration by the Secretary-General, who could revert to the General Assembly at a time he deemed appropriate after examining them. It was important to strengthen further the role, capacity, effectiveness, efficiency and performance of the Organization. The initiative of the Secretary-General, the work of the Change Management Team and the Change Management Plan were therefore welcome. The member States of the European Union had full confidence in the Secretary-General as the chief administrative officer of the Organization.

18. In a final attempt to achieve consensus, the delegations of the European Union member States had joined those of other like-minded countries in approaching the Group of 77 and China once again to

* The delegation of the Solomon Islands subsequently informed the Committee that it had intended to vote against the motion for division concerning section II of the draft resolution.

propose compromise wording for inclusion in the draft resolution. The ultimate failure of the negotiations was not in the interests of the Organization. The member States of the European Union continued to support the Secretary-General's change management initiative, and above all to support effective multilateralism and more effective delivery of the Organization's mandates through innovation and change management. They remained deeply concerned about the Committee's working methods, the reluctance to compromise and the willingness of a group of Member States to exploit a numerical majority, jeopardizing the partnership among all Member States and the sustainability of the Organization. The member States of the European Union looked forward to discussing in depth the issue of those working methods at the retreat organized by the President of the General Assembly on 13 and 14 April 2012, and urged a redoubling of efforts at future sessions, keeping in mind what should be the common goal of all: to have an efficient Organization which effectively fulfilled its mandates. For all the reasons just explained, the member States of the European Union urged all countries, irrespective of their group or regional affiliation, to vote against the draft resolution contained in document A/C.5/66/L.30.

19. *A recorded vote was taken on draft resolution A/C.5/66/L.30 as a whole.*

*In favour*:

Afghanistan, Algeria, Angola, Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Bahamas, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Barbados, Belarus, Benin, Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Botswana, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Chile, China, Colombia, Comoros, Congo, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Cuba, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Djibouti, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Eritrea, Gabon, Ghana, Grenada, Guatemala, Guyana, Honduras, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Iraq, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kuwait, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Lebanon, Liberia, Libya, Madagascar, Malaysia, Maldives, Mauritius, Mongolia, Morocco, Myanmar, Namibia, Nepal, Nicaragua, Niger, Nigeria, Oman, Pakistan, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Qatar, Russian Federation, Rwanda, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Singapore, Solomon Islands, South Africa, South Sudan, Sri Lanka, Syrian Arab Republic, Tajikistan, Thailand, Togo, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, Turkmenistan, Uganda, United Arab Emirates, United Republic of Tanzania, Uruguay, Uzbekistan, Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of), Viet Nam, Zambia, Zimbabwe.

*Against*:

Albania, Andorra, Australia, Austria, Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Canada, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Japan, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Monaco, Montenegro, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Palau, Poland, Republic of Korea, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Turkey, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America.

*Abstaining*:

Mexico, Panama, Papua New Guinea, Serbia, Ukraine.

20. *Draft resolution A/C.5/66/L.30 as a whole was adopted by 93 votes to 47, with 5 abstentions.*

21. **Mr. Torsella** (United States of America) said that the Committee had missed an opportunity to strengthen the accountability framework of the Organization, and to make it more modern, efficient and transparent, and able to deliver better results through responsible stewardship of resources. Despite the common ground between Member States on a number of important aspects of accountability, many had taken regrettable action to hinder the progress of the Secretary-General's change management initiative before it had begun, despite the fact that — as had already been pointed out — it was not even on the agenda for the session. That could undermine the authority which the Charter conferred on the Secretary-General as chief administrative officer of the Organization, affecting current and future holders of that office. His delegation strongly supported the Secretary-General's vision for a modern, engaged and efficient Secretariat; commended the collegial spirit in which he had shared his internal Change Management Plan with the Member States, and valued his commitment to building relationships based on mutual trust, greater flexibility and accountability, as outlined in the Plan.

22. The United States delegation trusted that the Secretary-General, like his predecessors, would consult with Member States if their approval was required, and noted that the Committee would have ample opportunity to assert its prerogatives on specific initiatives. It therefore strongly objected to, and had voted against, the draft resolution proposed by Algeria on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, which eroded accountability and weakened the Secretary-General's ability to advance important management reforms by attempting to delay his implementation of approximately half of all the recommendations of his Change Management Team. Two examples illustrated the resolution's overreach. Recommendation 40 urged the Secretary-General to direct his own senior managers to fly economy class for travel of less than six hours on one continent. Recommendation 28 urged him, through the Deputy Secretary-General, to keep legislative bodies and other partners well informed as the working groups on cost recovery and programme support costs concluded their work. It was to be supposed that the Committee was one of those very legislative bodies. His delegation's objection was not just substantive, but also procedural. Following the proposal to put the draft resolution to the vote, his delegation had been compelled to submit an amendment because some Member States had not sought the broadest possible agreement on the matter, departing from the long-standing principle of consensus-based decision-making in the Committee by including provisions that a significant number of delegations clearly opposed. That did not correspond to any definition of consensus, the principle which underpinned the legitimacy of the Committee's decision making.

23. **Mr. Okochi** (Japan) said that, while his delegation appreciated the efforts of the Member States and the Chair to secure a consensus on the draft resolution just adopted, it had voted against it. Having listened to the concerns of a group of Member States, it had joined other delegations in proposing wording by which the General Assembly would have requested the Secretary-General to present an analysis of the recommendations in the report of the Change Management Team to the Committee at the second part of the resumed sixty-sixth session. It was concerned that the draft resolution had been put to a vote despite the flexibility shown by Japan. Recalling the guidance on consensus-based decision-making provided in General Assembly resolution 41/213, he hoped to see a more constructive approach at the next part of the resumed session. Lastly, Japan reiterated its support for the Secretary-General's initiative to implement the measures in the report of the Change Management Team.

24. **Mr. Yoo** Dae Jong (Republic of Korea) said that his delegation had much appreciated the guidance and conciliation efforts made by the Chair in the final days of the first part of the resumed sixty-sixth session, particularly in the form of the balanced and forward-looking texts on accountability, the capital master plan and the Office of Internal Oversight Services proposed prior to the current meeting. As those matters had an effect on the efficient management of the Secretariat, it was understandable that the Member State delegations had worked long hours and altered the schedule for completion of their discussions. Despite the earlier hope that agreement was near, it was disappointing that the Committee had resorted to voting on the draft resolution regarding accountability rather than taking a decision by consensus. His delegation had felt obliged to vote against the draft resolution, believing that responsibility and accountability went hand-in-hand with flexibility and discretion.

25. **Mr. McLay** (New Zealand), speaking also on behalf of Australia and Canada, said that the three delegations joined others in expressing their deep disappointment. As the Chair's efforts in the run-up to the current meeting had demonstrated, a consensus had been within reach, and Australia, Canada and New Zealand had been prepared to take up the consensus proposal, even though it did not meet their own needs. It was unfortunate that others had not been prepared to do the same. The three delegations had indicated from the very beginning of the Committee's discussion on accountability that they considered the report of the Change Management Team to be an internal document of the United Nations Secretariat and therefore found the inclusion of wording relating to that report in a draft resolution on the agenda item concerned entirely inappropriate. It was not for the Committee to micromanage the Secretariat or to prejudge the views of the Secretary-General or limit his authority. They reiterated their full confidence and trust in the Secretary-General and in his determination to deliver on his reform agenda with the support of Member States, seeking approval from the General Assembly when such approval was required or was appropriate. It was not appropriate to instruct him to take no action on

matters that were clearly within the authority given to him by the Charter of the United Nations. It was not appropriate to question his authority, or to challenge confidence and trust in him, at the current time, in the current venue or in connection with the current issue. The three delegations remained determined to carry forward the essential work of the Committee and to work constructively with all delegations to that end, positively and in good faith. They remained committed to supporting the Secretary-General's reform agenda and to making the Organization more accountable, transparent and efficient.

26. **Mr. Gürber** (Switzerland) said that his delegation regretted that intense discussions on the draft resolution just adopted had failed to produce a consensus. Reaching decisions by vote went against the spirit of the Committee. A resolution on an issue of such significance to the future management of the Organization should not have been imposed through a vote. Switzerland fully supported efforts to put in place an accountability system, and believed that the Secretary-General must be given a sufficient margin of initiative if he was to develop solid reform proposals to submit to the Member States and make sure that the Organization was strong, efficient and modern. The resolution adopted was clearly unsatisfactory from that standpoint, and Switzerland had therefore voted against it.

27. **Ms. Smith** (Norway) said that the work of the Committee should be guided by consensus as a matter of principle. Her delegation was deeply disappointed at the recourse to a vote on the matter under discussion, having taken consensus as its aim and having demonstrated great flexibility. Consensus had been within the Committee's reach, but the vote had been forced upon it. An amendment presented in a spirit of compromise had been rejected, and her delegation had found itself unable to vote in favour of the resulting draft.

28. **Mr. Cumberbatch** (Cuba) said that the outcome of the votes taken on the issues under consideration had been clear. Despite the repeated assertions of a number of delegations, the proposals of the Change Management Team did in fact fall within the scope of the agenda item, a fact confirmed by the Secretariat when it disregarded clear results-based management mandates contained in General Assembly resolution 64/269 on cross-cutting issues. The change management proposals were in essence a unilateral vision of the way in which the Organization should operate. A number of delegations had been quick to endorse those proposals, but nobody had asked the views of his delegation. Although it was claimed that the Group of 77 and China should take the blame for being unwilling to compromise, innumerable alternative forms of wording had been put forward during almost five weeks of discussion. The result reached at the current meeting was only a reflection of the fact that, contrary to the claim made in the note by the Secretary-General of 14 March 2012, the change management proposals did not enjoy wide support. It would have been far preferable for the Secretary-General to have abided by his role and mandate, and for the process to have been more transparent. Withholding the report of the Change Management Team from the Member States during budget discussions, only to see it made public later by a major United States media outlet, was not an exercise in transparency.

29. The recommendations in the report of the Change Management Team, including those purporting to mark the revival of a review of mandates and reform of the Secretariat, and affecting the role of the Committee for Programme and Coordination, were simply unacceptable. It was striking that delegations that had called for a vote on programme budget proposals in the past were currently citing a need for consensus. It was also striking that others, when it suited them, had used internal documents to support their views on the conduct of peacekeeping operations. More sincerity and less double standards would be welcome. He hoped that the Secretary-General and his officials would return to the neutral position ordered by the Charter of the United Nations, and would implement the resolution in the form in which it had been adopted. Finally, he wished to express concern at the way in which the voting machine had functioned at such a sensitive time.

30. **Mr. Rosales Díaz** (Nicaragua) said that he wished to congratulate the new Under-Secretary-General, Chef de Cabinet to the Secretary-General. The debate and difficulties surrounding the current meeting demonstrated that she had substantial challenges ahead of her. The Secretariat had an important role in building trust between itself and the Member States and between the Member States in the General Assembly. During the first part of the resumed sixty-sixth session, the Group of 77 and China had spared no

effort to find a consensus. It had faced a lack of political will, a lack of flexibility and arrogance in the form of repeated statements that the members of the Group must align their position with that of the other participants in the negotiations for the sake of consensus. The Group believed that flexibility was a two-way process, but had found a lack of understanding of that principle during the Committee's consultations.

31. He wondered why the very Member States which currently insisted that change management was not part of the Committee's agenda had endorsed the report of the Change Management Team at the Committee's 26th meeting, the first of the resumed session. Clearly, the wide support which the Secretary-General had announced when he presented the report to the Member States did not in fact exist. The result had been deep concern, misunderstanding, division and mistrust. Overcoming those problems required learning to listen to each other rather than repeating assertions and arguments that only frustrated proceedings rather than promoting agreement. He hoped that all concerned would learn from recent experience. It was impossible to impose on the General Assembly fundamental changes to the intergovernmental process or to processes that formed an integral part of its prerogatives. The Secretariat must redouble its efforts to address the environment of distrust that had emerged, and must demonstrate thorough understanding of the intergovernmental machinery, something which it had not done at the close of the main part of the sixty-sixth session, when some delegations had proposed politicized wording that the Committee had left out of the draft resolution adopted. Surprisingly, that politicized wording had reappeared in the report of the Secretary-General on change management. Such occurrences were suspicious and did not encourage trust, either between the Member States, or between the Member States and the Secretariat.

32. As a Main Committee of the General Assembly, the Fifth Committee made decisions which enjoyed a legitimacy conferred by the Charter of the United Nations. The process of making those decisions was governed by the Charter itself, the Organization's founding principle of sovereign equality of States and by the rules of procedure of the General Assembly. No purpose was served by preaching the benefits of democratic principles, which all Member States defended, while simultaneously failing to uphold those principles in the General Assembly. Such double standards were unacceptable. Surprisingly, the delegations which were so vociferous in their calls for a consensus had been unwilling to accept the second preambular paragraph of section II of the resolution, which, in recalling General Assembly resolution 41/213, reaffirmed the need to seek the widest possible agreement in the Committee. The challenge before the Committee was to restore the spirit of dialogue and understanding of the concerns of all parties. He hoped that the Secretariat would help with that task.

33. **Mr. Mihoubi** (Algeria), speaking on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, said that the Group was committed to reform of the Organization, to accountability and to transparency. Work with its partners to agree on the wording of section I of the draft resolution contained in document A/C.5/66/L.30 had proceeded smoothly. Any suggestion that the group opposed accountability was entirely unfounded. With regard to the conduct of the negotiations, the Group had found its partners unresponsive to proposals from the outset. Had they responded favourably, the Committee would have been able to take its decision without voting. The Group had continued to propose alternative wording until the very last moment, only to find its proposals rejected. As a result, any suggestion that the group opposed decision-making by consensus was also without basis.

*Questions deferred for future consideration*
(A/C.5/66/L.32)

*Draft decision A/C.5/66/L.32. Questions deferred for future consideration*

34. *Draft decision A/C.5/66/L.32 was adopted.*

**Completion of the work of the Fifth Committee at the first part of the resumed sixty-sixth session of the General Assembly**

35. **Mr. Torsella** (United States of America) said that, after long and arduous negotiations and failure to reach agreement on important items on the Committee's agenda, his delegation was disappointed with the overall outcome of the first part of the resumed sixty-sixth session. However, it was encouraged by the unity in the Committee, expressed in the draft resolution contained in document A/C.5/66/L.31, regarding the worrying cost overruns in the capital master plan

which, according to the Secretariat, had tripled since December 2011 to $265 million, not including associated costs. Action must be taken to determine how and when those cost overruns had occurred and how they would be mitigated by the Secretary-General, who had been given authority by the General Assembly to commit only a limited additional amount in the current year, and who had been asked to find additional options to finance such commitments while remaining within the budget approved. His delegation looked forward to the results of the external technical construction audit as a first step in assigning responsibility and recovering expenditure, and called on the Secretary-General to seek savings rather than simply assuming that additional assessments could be requested to complete the project. Stricter oversight was required. His delegation's support for the capital master plan was conditional on significantly improved management and budget discipline. It called for more frequent updates on the progress and financial details of the project.

36. Although the Committee had also reached agreement on a few important issues, including limited budgetary discretion for the Secretary-General, it had failed to reach agreement on, and had deferred consideration of, a number of others. In connection with standards of accommodation for air travel, despite learning that an astonishing $54 million of the Secretariat's $74 million expenditure on air travel for New York and Geneva had been devoted to paying business class fares, the Member States had been unable to agree even on a change that was so clearly a matter of common sense: requiring the Organization's interns to fly in economy class. That was a troubling reflection on the Committee's ability to fulfil its basic oversight responsibilities. In connection with the prospect of improving the transparency and accountability of the Organization by making available for public viewing the audit reports of the Office of Internal Oversight Services, the resistance of some Member States to such a measure was ironic at a time when many had professed their commitment to the principles of open government. Citizens had a right to see whether revenue from their taxes was being wisely spent. He questioned whether any member of the Committee could seriously consider informing a journalist or researcher from his or her own country that, unlike the Committee, they were not entitled to read such reports. For the second successive session, the General Assembly had failed to take action on that proposal. That inaction was a source of disappointment, not for the United States delegation, but for the Organization. He urged all Member States which professed to support transparency to declare their positions on that simple and long-overdue reform.

37. **Mr. Desta** (Eritrea) thanked the Chair, the Bureau, the coordinators of informal consultations and the staff of the Secretariat for their assistance during the first part of the resumed session. However, for the third consecutive year, his delegation wished to reiterate its concern at the many difficulties facing the Committee, two of which were particularly significant. The first was the late submission of documents. The second was the lack of political will to work for consensus. He intended to elaborate on that matter during the retreat organized by the President of the General Assembly on 13 and 14 April 2012, but wished to stress that the Committee could only succeed if its members worked together. Not the least of the consequences of such an approach would be the elimination of long hours of exhausting negotiation.

38. **The Chair** declared that the Fifth Committee had completed its work at the first part of the resumed sixty-sixth session of the General Assembly.

*The meeting rose at 10.35 p.m.*